

MILITARY DEPARTMENT.

To the Officiating Secretary to the Government of India,
Military Department, Calcutta.

SIR,—I have had the honor of receiving and laying before the Right Honorable the Governor General your letter No. 473 of the 25th ultimo, with its enclosures herewith returned, from Mr. Piddington, submitting a memorandum, with sketch of a Camel litter for the conveyance of the sick and wounded in the Army of the Indus.

In reply, I am instructed to convey the expression of His Lordship's acknowledgments to Mr. Piddington for his useful communication, a copy of which will be forwarded to His Excellency Lieut.-General Sir John Kean, K. C. B. Commanding the Army of the Indus, for information.

J. STUART, Lt. Col.

ART. III.—*Note by DR. KEAN of Moorshedabad, on DR. STEWART'S Table of Mortality among Hindu Females.*

To the Secretaries of the Asiatic Society.

SIR,—The table furnished by Dr. Stewart, and published in the Journal of the Society for April last, may be expected to attract much attention. Its results are unexpected and startling. Considering the ignorance that prevails on the subject of Indian statistics, the unexpectedness of such information may be no argument against its accuracy; but the frightful mortality which the Table exhibits as arising from one source, will lead many to doubt its correctness, and all, to wish that there may have been some error in the data on which it is based.

We learn from the Table that *one-fifth* of the female population of Bengal die in childbed. But we know that only a *portion* of the female population *can*, during any given period, suffer from this cause of mortality. This portion might perhaps, without involving much error, be estimated at *one-third* of the whole; and if so, a mortality amounting to *one-fifth* of the female population will be equivalent to *three-fifths* of the portion actually liable to that cause of mortality;—in other words, out of every *five* of the mothers in Bengal, *three* will die in childbed.

It is not however by arguments of this kind, nor indeed by arguments of any kind, that the truth of the Table can either be established or overturned. A census ought to be taken, and accurate

registers kept, of such casualties as occur within the limits. A general census, though desirable, is not absolutely necessary on the subject.

In replying to the inquiries of the Secretary to the Prison Discipline Committee, the writer of this took the opportunity of suggesting the advantages that might be obtained from taking the census and keeping registers in particular Zillahs, or in limited districts around every Jail. It is obvious that such registers would have been available for many purposes, but the advantage then mainly insisted upon, was the facility that would have been afforded for comparing the mortality in the Jails, with that in the surrounding districts. It is understood that the suggestion was referred by the authorities to the Sudder Dewanny, who discouraged it, on the ground that it would lead to vexatious domestic intrusions. Convinced that the plan might be carried into execution without causing either vexation or annoyance, he selected a village containing 762 inhabitants, in the neighbourhood of the Moorshedabad Jail, and kept a register of the births and deaths for one year. During this period no death occurred from childbirth. Next year the register was made to include another village, embracing altogether a population of 2,778 persons, and during this period there was entered only one death in childbed. The registers for the first year were placed in the hands of your late Secretary by Mr. Adam, and are doubtless to be found among the papers of the Society.

These registers are not alluded to here as any authority on this subject, but merely as a practical evidence that they can be kept without causing trouble or inconvenience to any one. It is to be hoped, therefore, that Government will speedily institute measures for ascertaining the truth on this important question.

The above observations are by no means intended to convey the idea, that the mortality among native females from the cause assigned is not very great, on the contrary, it is believed to be excessive; nor is it likely to be otherwise till means are taken to disseminate among them something like information, and to introduce something like rational practice in reference to obstetric medicine. Yours truly,

MOORSHEDABAD,

A. KEAN.

11th October, 1839.

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*Explanatory Note by DR. DUNCAN STEWART, Superintendent General of Vaccination.*

Mr. Kean has very justly pointed out a blunder in the note which accompanied my Table, published in the April number of the Journal,

which certainly conveys to the reader the erroneous impression that all the 1328 cases of "childbed disease" were mothers.

I took the earliest opportunity in my power of rectifying the misapprehension which this gave rise to, as soon as it was pointed out to me, by addressing a brief note to the *Englishman* newspaper on the subject.

If you will do me the favor, in noticing Mr. Kean's letter, to refer him to the paragraph which I have marked in the accompanying printed copy of my Evidence before the Municipal Committee, and the annexed Table, he will perceive that the mistake has arisen from the careless omission of an explanation there given of the native term used to denote that class of diseases.

"The term employed to include all accidents of this nature, and applied indiscriminately to the infant and the mother, (antari-roq) is one which attributes the fatal termination of such cases to demoniacal influence. It is not applied to casualties after the first month, and we may therefore conclude that the picture here given, distressing though it be, does not exhibit the total amount of suffering, and of death, caused by the barbarity, ignorance, and prejudices, of the Hindoos in their management of lying-in women. The number of still-born children is not given at all, nor is it, I fear, ascertainable. The picture is sufficiently frightful, which shows, as matter of fact, that of 1801 children who died during the first year of life, 1237 died from the accidents of childbed. Out of 88 mothers who lost their lives in childbed, four appear to have been so young as thirteen, two aged fourteen, six aged fifteen, and eight died between the ages of fifteen and twenty."

By reference to the annexed Table it will be seen that of the 1328 cases of "childbed" mortality, 1237 were infants under one year of age; and referring again to the Table in your April Journal it will be seen that most of these were not one month *ill*, and probably *not older*; 356 are stated to have died on the first day of illness; 308 on the second; 146 on the third, and so on. Neither the Table now sent nor the former has reference to the ratio of "mortality to population:" the imperfection of the census, which does not assign the ages of the *living* on any particular day, renders this impossible. The present Table exhibits merely the comparative prevalence and mortality of particular diseases, and the influence of these as affected by sex and age. The Table in the April Journal was drawn up from the same data, in order to discover the intensity of particular diseases, as evinced by their *duration*, before causing death.

Table of 20,000 Hindoo deaths, showing the mortality by particular diseases, and at particular ages of both sexes.

| Ages.                    | Fevers. | Small-pox. | Dysentery. | Cholera. | Spleen & fever diseases. | Pulmonic diseases. | Cerebral and nervous diseases. | Constitutional diseases. | Accidents & anomalous. | Childbed diseases. | Total. |          | Total. | Per centage of ages. |
|--------------------------|---------|------------|------------|----------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------|----------|--------|----------------------|
|                          |         |            |            |          |                          |                    |                                |                          |                        |                    | Males. | Females. |        |                      |
| 1 year,                  | 276     | 41         | 126        | 86       | 5                        | 7                  | 10                             | 3                        | 10                     | 1,237              | 983    | 818      | 1,801  | 9-005                |
| 2 "                      | 152     | 21         | 195        | 75       | 13                       | 6                  | 4                              | 10                       | 10                     | 3                  | 254    | 235      | 489    |                      |
| 3 "                      | 167     | 26         | 197        | 78       | 13                       | 1                  | 8                              | 13                       | 6                      | 0                  | 274    | 235      | 509    |                      |
| 4 "                      | 87      | 30         | 127        | 75       | 5                        | 2                  | 1                              | 5                        | 2                      | 0                  | 181    | 149      | 330    |                      |
| 5 "                      | 113     | 32         | 101        | 72       | 6                        | 1                  | 6                              | 4                        | 12                     | 0                  | 224    | 126      | 350    | 7-38                 |
| 6 "                      | 61      | 21         | 75         | 56       | 7                        | 5                  | 4                              | 2                        | 2                      | 0                  | 141    | 92       | 233    |                      |
| 7 "                      | 66      | 17         | 65         | 57       | 9                        | 1                  | 4                              | 5                        | 7                      | 0                  | 112    | 119      | 231    |                      |
| 8 "                      | 47      | 16         | 63         | 46       | 6                        | 2                  | 1                              | 2                        | 2                      | 0                  | 91     | 94       | 185    |                      |
| 9 "                      | 49      | 17         | 45         | 30       | 8                        | 3                  | 3                              | 1                        | 9                      | 0                  | 104    | 61       | 185    |                      |
| 10 "                     | 65      | 15         | 70         | 53       | 10                       | 5                  | 4                              | 5                        | 2                      | 0                  | 141    | 88       | 229    | 5-315                |
| 11 "                     | 54      | 13         | 21         | 34       | 8                        | 0                  | 4                              | 2                        | 3                      | 0                  | 88     | 55       | 139    |                      |
| 12 "                     | 84      | 24         | 59         | 66       | 19                       | 4                  | 2                              | 3                        | 9                      | 0                  | 150    | 120      | 270    |                      |
| 13 "                     | 39      | 11         | 13         | 36       | 12                       | 4                  | 3                              | 2                        | 3                      | 4                  | 79     | 48       | 127    |                      |
| 14 "                     | 86      | 7          | 51         | 44       | 13                       | 5                  | 4                              | 3                        | 5                      | 2                  | 122    | 96       | 218    |                      |
| 15 "                     | 67      | 14         | 32         | 58       | 8                        | 7                  | 8                              | 5                        | 4                      | 6                  | 129    | 80       | 209    | 4-815                |
| 20 "                     | 624     | 65         | 392        | 466      | 57                       | 79                 | 20                             | 33                       | 31                     | 8                  | 1,131  | 645      | 1,776  | 8-88                 |
| 30 "                     | 1,123   | 81         | 770        | 1,293    | 51                       | 197                | 42                             | 42                       | 25                     | 37                 | 2,672  | 998      | 3,670  | 18-25                |
| 40 "                     | 899     | 17         | 742        | 896      | 21                       | 148                | 18                             | 62                       | 64                     | 26                 | 1,995  | 898      | 2,893  | 14-65                |
| 50 "                     | 559     | 8          | 605        | 600      | 19                       | 107                | 19                             | 36                       | 31                     | 2                  | 1,326  | 661      | 1,987  | 9-935                |
| 60 "                     | 463     | 2          | 577        | 308      | 10                       | 67                 | 21                             | 46                       | 43                     | 3                  | 970    | 570      | 1,540  | 7-7                  |
| 70 "                     | 228     | 4          | 365        | 153      | 6                        | 42                 | 9                              | 34                       | 14                     | 0                  | 463    | 392      | 855    | 4-225                |
| 80 "                     | 256     | 4          | 627        | 137      | 5                        | 74                 | 34                             | 26                       | 13                     | 0                  | 511    | 665      | 1,176  | 5-88                 |
| 90 "                     | 75      | 2          | 230        | 36       | 0                        | 18                 | 4                              | 13                       | 0                      | 0                  | 148    | 230      | 378    | 1-89                 |
| 100 "                    | 32      | 0          | 173        | 16       | 0                        | 7                  | 0                              | 4                        | 2                      | 0                  | 62     | 178      | 240    | 1-2                  |
| Totals,..                | 5,672   | 488        | 5,733      | 4,773    | 311                      | 792                | 233                            | 361                      | 309                    | 1,328              | 12,347 | 7,653    | 20,000 | 100                  |
| Per centage of diseases. | 28-36   | 1-22       | 28-665     | 23-865   | 1-555                    | 3-96               | 1-165                          | 1-805                    | 1-545                  | 6-64               | 61-735 | 38-265   |        |                      |

